

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, PDEV, KS, KN

SUBJECT: YI HU-RAK AND SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE

1. PRIMIN'S SECRETARY HAN SANG-KUK DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR NORTH KOREAN REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH YI HU-RAK IN COORDINATING COMMITTEE. HAN SAID THAT OBVIOUSLY NORTH KOREANS DO NOT WANT TO SHOW ANY PROGRESS IN SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE BEFORE OR DURING THE UNGA. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY WERE QUITE READY TO SEIZE ON KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE TO PUT BLAME ON ROK SIDE FOR THEIR OWN ACTION IN SUSPENDING COORDINATING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES.

2. HAN SAID, HOWEVER, IT IS HIS ASSESSMENT THAT THE MAIN NORTH KOREAN PURPOSE IS, IN FACT, TO GET RID OF YI HU-RAK AS THE SOLE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION WITH THE SOUTH.

3. HAN SAID, SINCE JUNE AT LEAST, THERE HAVE BEEN CLEAR SIGNS THAT NORTH KOREANS WERE UNCOMFORTABLE IN DEALING WITH YI HU-RAK ALONE AND WANTED TO ESTABLISH A PROPER GOVERNMENTAL CHANNEL IN DELAINGS WITH THE SOUTH. ORGINALLY, NORTH KOREANS HAD ASSUMED THAT YI, AS ROK CIA DIRECTOR, HAD INDEPENDENT POWER AND WAS SECOND ONLY TO PRESIDENT PARK IN ROK HIERARCHY. HOWEVER, STARING WITH YUN PIL-YONG

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CASE, NORTH KOREAN SIDE BEGAN TO HAVE INCREASING

DOUBTS ABOUT YI'S AUTHORITY, AS WELL AS HIS TENURE IN HIS POST. IN CONTRAST, NORTH KOREAN BECAME INCREASINGLY AWARE OF PRIMIN'S STATURE. ACCORDING HAN, KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE AND SUBSEQUENT MAJOR ATTACKS ON ROK CIA BY FOREIGN PRESS PROBABLY FURTHER CONVINCED THEM THAT YI'S POSITION WAS BEING WEAKENED AND THAT IT WAS NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION.

4. HAN CONFIDED THAT DURING PRIMIN'S MAY-JUNE OVERSEAS TRIP, NORTH KOREANS MADE TWO SERIOUS, DIRECT ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH HIM. HAN WAS APPROACHED BY NORTH KOREANS IN BOTH PARIS AND TOKYO REQUESTING THAT PRIMIN MEET WITH DPRK REPS. HAN REFUSED THESE OVERTURES AND NORTH KOREANS THEN SUGGESTED THAT CHANNEL BE ESTABLISHED WITH SOME TRUSTED PERSON DESIGNATED BY PRIMIN. THIS WAS ALSO REJECTED. IN THEIR APPROACHES NORTH KOREANS MADE CLEAR THEIR DESIRE TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH PRIMIN KIM. PRIMIN KIM TOLD YI HU-RAK OF THESE APPROACHES AND HIS REJECTION OF THEM.

5. HAN SAID THAT BOTH SIDES WILL NOW HAVE TO NEGOTIATE SOME NEW, FACE-SAVING ARRANGEMENT ON COORDINATING COMMITTEE. HE PREDICTED THAT SUCH A NEGOTIATION WOULD TAKE A FEW MONTHS AND WOULD PROBABLY END UP WITH REPLACEMENT OF BOTH YI HU-RAK AND KIM YONG-CHU AS CO-CHAIRMEN.

6. COMMENT: HAN'S COMMENTS ARE ANOTHER EVIDENCE OF TENSIONS BETWEEN YI HU-RAK AND PRIMIN. HAN CLEARLY WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE HIS "PERSONAL" ASSESSMENT TO US.

7. GRANTING HAN'S BIAS, IT IS TRUE THAT YI HU-RAK HAD, AFTER LAST COORDINATING COMMITTEE SESSION, TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT NORTH KOREANS WERE OBVIOUSLY PROBING TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER HIS POSITION HAD BEEN WEAKENED. ADLER

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